Elevating Fisheries in Transboundary Management in the Lower Mekong Basin

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Value of fisheries in the LMB

- Capture fisheries fundamental to nutrition, food security, livelihoods and societal well-being
- Crucial to recognise importance of other aquatic animals
- Most of the catch consumed directly by households, and is unreported
- Fisheries dependent on free movement (all seasons) and distribution of fish, extent of flooding and sediment dynamics

Fish migration zones and patterns in LMB
Transboundary pressures on fisheries in the LMB

• Fisheries exploitation:
  - Increasing demand, increasing population growth, illegal fishing

• Agriculture/rice farming:
  - Disconnection of floodplains, intensification of production, pesticides, fertilizers

• Sediment extraction:
  - Alteration of channel morphology and flooding regimes; reduction in nutrient loadings

• Hydropower:
  - Barriers to migration; inundation of key fish habitats, disruption of flow regimes

• Climate Change:
  - Increased flooding and drought; disruption of flooding cycles
Action to address transboundary fisheries issues

- Numerous nature reserves, protected areas, fish conservation zones, fish sanctuaries, deep pools and community ponds and habitats throughout the region. Most not explicitly designed for fisheries.

- Restoration of wetland habitats and reconnection of floodplains. Fish passage easements largely ineffective for large tropical rivers, especially at large HPP installations.

- Fisheries management measures, including co-management initiatives, and stock enhancement. Lack of harmonization across LMB.
Problems with current management actions

• Options do not fully consider multi-dimensional impacts of water and land use developments in LMB- need upstream-downstream thinking
• Fish passage is just one (untested) tool in a suite of measures to support fisheries
• Improve mechanisms to communicate importance of fish conservation and fisheries to livelihoods, local economies and food security and influence decision-making—use ecosystem services approach
• Further promote mechanisms to integrate fish and fisheries into the wider ecosystem planning process
In more practical terms, this means:

• Building bridges between water resource and societal development and fisheries by:
  • Understanding motives and drivers of other sectors
  • Improving the linkages between sectoral approaches
  • Minimising conflicts- consider alternative energy mixes
  • Optimising resource use through cross-sectoral management

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THANK YOU